

CHECKLIST · BEFORE BUILDING

Pre-Contract Checklist

Everything to confirm before the contract is even put in front of you.
Nineteen checks that separate a good builder from an expensive lesson.

BEFORE YOU START Almost every serious build problem traces back to something that was knowable before signing. This is the homework. Do it while you still have the power to walk away — *which is the only real leverage you will ever have.*

19 CHECKS BEFORE THE CONTRACT ARRIVES

VET THE BUILDER

- ☐ **Licence is current**
Confirm the builder licence is valid and active with your state building authority.
- ☐ **Insurance in place**
Confirm they hold domestic building or home warranty insurance for your project value.
- ☐ **Seen their work**
You have visited 2 to 3 completed builds or display homes.
- ☐ **Spoken to past clients**
You have asked previous clients about quality, communication and how issues were handled.

GET INDEPENDENT EYES ON IT

- ☐ **Solicitor review**
An independent solicitor or conveyancer has reviewed the contract before you sign.
- ☐ **Independent inspector lined up**
You have considered an independent inspector for key build stages.

CONTRACT BASICS

- ☐ **Fixed price**
It is a fixed price contract, not cost-plus, unless you fully understand the risk.
- ☐ **Price matches quote**
The contract price matches the quote you agreed to.
- ☐ **Build time stated**
Construction time is stated in days with a clear start trigger.
- ☐ **Late penalty clause**
There is a liquidated damages clause if the builder finishes late.
- ☐ **Deposit within legal cap**
The deposit requested is within the legal limit for your state.

INCLUSIONS AND ALLOWANCES

- ☐ **Full inclusions list**
A complete, itemised inclusions list is attached.
- ☐ **Realistic allowances**
PC and PS allowances are realistic, not low-balled to win the job.
- ☐ **Site costs fixed**
Site costs are fixed, not left as subject to survey.
- ☐ **Scope is clear**
Driveway, landscaping, fencing and the like are clearly in or out of scope.

WALK AWAY RED FLAGS

- ☐ **Pressure to sign fast**
Be cautious of any push to sign quickly.
- ☐ **Vague scope**
The scope of works is missing or vague.
- ☐ **Large deposit**
An unusually large deposit is requested.
- ☐ **Verbal promises**
Promises made verbally are not written into the contract.

TAKE THESE WITH YOU

Questions to ask before you sign

- 1 Can you provide your builder licence number and a current insurance certificate?
- 2 Is this a fixed price contract with no cost-plus elements?
- 3 What is not included that I should budget for separately?

A builder who is irritated by these questions has told you something useful. A good one will answer every single point without blinking.

KEEP GOING

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